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ABSTRACT

Reviewed is the development of a set of performance objectives to provide for continuous educational progress in an early childhood education program for disadvantaged children in Paterson, New Jersey. Noted are sources of objectives and successful use of the objectives in the program. The objectives reported cover the following skill areas: listening, naming, observing, speaking, mathematics, writing, classification, reading-encoding/decoding, and seriation. It is explained that the objectives are used to assess the child's initial performance as well as to guide instruction. Reviewed is a questionnaire sent to teachers involved in an ungraded but homogeneously grouped reading program for grades 1 through 3; all teachers wanted the reading format continued. It is reported that first level children who received instruction with the performance objectives at the kindergarten and pre-kindergarten levels are achieving at the national norm in both reading and math. (DB)

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DALE AVENUE SCHOOL

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY

A TITLE III E.S.E.A. PROJECT
PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESEARCH BULLETIN VOLUME II NO. 3

July, 1972

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Background of Performance Objectives at Dale Avenue School

When the Dale Avenue Early Childhood Education Center opened in September, 1969 Dr. Michael Gioia, Superintendent of Schools announced that this center would be set up for kindergarten through third grade, but would be basically ungraded. Each child would be allowed to move at his own pace within the range of his own abilities. Furthermore, the child's social, physical, cultural and emotional development as well as his academic knowledge would be fostered.

Needs assessment of urban disadvantaged pre-school children was begun at the Paterson State College Demonstration School in 1968, where a group of thirty Paterson children were enrolled in an experimental program. Specific educational goals were set up for these children after they were pre-tested with the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Form A. The Draw a Man Test, and after some specific skills were denoted as being undeveloped through teacher observation. Educational gains were determined at this demonstration pre-school through post-testing with the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Form B, The Draw a Man Test, and the teacher constructed Skills Assessment and Identity and Body Parts Test.

In February of 1969 Mrs. Vera P. Thompson, Director of Funded Programs, initiated with the Title I Pre-Kindergarten Staff a plan to formulate a curriculum for the Title I Pre-Kindergartens. Bank Street College was contracted with to monitor the program at the First Baptist Church. Bank Street consultant services were secured for the first year of the program.

In April of 1969 Mr. Reginald Brown, Social Worker Coordinator for Title I programs contacted Mr. J. Robert Cleary, Director of Field Services at Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey to seek assistance in creating and formulating an evaluation program which would assess the development of the individual pre-kindergarten and kindergarten child. Mr. Cleary suggested that performance objectives be used to determine cognitive abilities and that the Paterson, Title I pre-kindergarten staff be asked to list goals which they felt pre-kindergarten children might be expected to achieve. In July of 1969 existing pre-kindergarten staff met and contributed these goals many of which were affective in nature.

In December of 1969 Miss Harriet Gibbs, Director of Pre-Kindergarten, Mrs. Helen Hanson, Assistant Director of Pre-Kindergarten and Mr. Reginald Brown, Title I Social Worker met with Mr. J. Robert Cleary in Paterson and decided on some of the headings under which the Performance Objectives would be listed. The categories Listening, Naming, Observing, Encoding, Math and Classification were chosen at this time and a tentative first and terminal objective in each category were written. In January of 1969 the other categories of Writing and Motor Skills and Perceptual Motor Skills were added by Mrs. Hanson and the remainder of the Performance Objectives were written. Mrs. Rita Gavzy, Speech Therapist for Title I, Dale Avenue School, added the speaking category and wrote the Performance Objectives for this section. The results of the 1968-69 testing and the results of the Peabody Test given by Mrs. Hanson and Mrs. Gavzy to all of the pre-

kindergarten children at Dale Avenue School in 1969 substantiated the belief that the need to develop language (standard English) was a top priority in the pre-kindergarten curriculum.

In August 1969 Classification was completely rewritten using "Thinking is Child's Play" by Evelyn Sharp, as a basis for this section.

In the Spring of 1970 it became apparent that additional personnel would be needed to assist the professional staff of the Dale Avenue Center and the community served by it if the social, physical, emotional and cognitive development of each child was to be fostered. Consequently, a Title III proposal for a program to produce a more effective curriculum, pre-kindergarten through third level, was written by Mrs. Vera P. Thompson, Director of Funded Programs and a writing team including Mr. Eugene Mason of the State Department of Education, Mr. Joseph Heitzman, Assistant Director of Funded Programs and the following Dale Avenue School personnel: Mr. Peter J. Wild, Principal; Miss Harriet Gibbs, Director of Pre-Kindergarten; Mrs. Helen Hanson, Assistant Director of Pre-Kindergarten; Mr. Reginald Brown, Social Worker Coordinator; Mrs. Marie O'Mara, Psychologist; Mrs. Rita Gavzy, Speech Therapist.

The Title III Dale Avenue Urban Early Childhood Education Project was the outcome of this proposal. It became the duty of the Title III staff members who were hired in October 1970 to complete and refine the behavioral objectives that had been compiled the previous year; to train staff in implementing these objectives; to pre and post test

the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten population at Dale Avenue and control groups; and to assess the value of the program. Ilg and Ames, Piaget, Bereiter and Engelmann, Deutsch, Doman and Gesell were a few of the authors who provided the source for the material found in the Pre-Kindergarten - Kindergarten Performance Objective Curriculum [1]. These objectives were to act as the teacher's diagnostic pre and post test to help her to group children and to indicate individual need. The record of the objectives that each child had completed would go along with him to the next teacher so the child could continue along with the new teacher with those objectives that he was now ready to master. It was hoped that this would eliminate teaching material to whole classes where some of the children already knew the material and others were not developmentally ready to learn it.

Statistical analysis of the data from 1970-71 Title III project indicated that the Pre-Kindergarten - Kindergarten program was a success. (Details of this are included in Volume 1, No. 4 of the project bulletins.)

After the performance objectives had been piloted for six months, they were rearranged in the order in which the Dale Avenue Pre-Kindergarten - Kindergarten population had mastered them. Suggestions were requested from the Dale Avenue teachers in regard to change in wording, order and addition or deletion of objectives. These suggestions were incorporated into the revision of the Pre-Kindergarten - Kindergarten Performance Objectives.

[1] Refer to Pages 21-24, Bibliography

Development of First Through Third Level Performance Objectives

The original plan for the 1971-72 second year of the project had been to continue along the same lines as the previous year; to develop curriculum; to test first grade pupils in '71-'72; and to test the second and third grade pupils the following year.

The original plan was altered because the second and third level children were being taught second and third grade material rather than being allowed to perform at developmental level. Previous Stanford scores had indicated that the second and third level children were lagging behind their more advantaged peers in reading skills. Teacher evaluation and spot checking indicated that, developmentally, many of the children were behind in listening, skills, math., vocabulary development, writing and motor skills, speaking and perceptual motor skills. These were the very areas in which pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children at Dale Avenue School showed deficiencies. It was decided to develop first through third level objectives and thereby ungrade the entire Dale Avenue School. Children were to be tested on pre-kindergarten through third level objectives to determine just what they could do in each of the areas and where they were developmentally.

Assessment of the needs of the second and third level children in the Fall of 1971 was made through teacher evaluation and a random sampling of the Bank Street Reading Test.

In January, 1972 assessment was made through the Peabody Picture Vocabulary sampling and the testing of all first through third level children on the Pre-Kindergarten through Third Level Performance Objectives. It was reconfirmed at this time that some second and third level children were functioning on kindergarten or first level in the areas of perceptual motor skills, listening, naming, math, reading (encoding/decoding), speaking, writing and motor skills.

It was further decided that in 1972-73 the Title III staff would revise the First through Third Level Performance Objective Curriculum and collect, analyse and interpret the experimental and control group data. The second and third year of the project like the first would involve implementation of the curriculum, much teacher training and parent involvement.

Because the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children had made such significant gains in 1970-71 in all of the areas in which second and third level children had deficiencies, it was decided to continue the performance objective format that had proved successful in the pre-kindergarten - kindergarten program. The language arts area was broken down into listening, naming and speaking. Science was broken down into observing, classification and seriation. Reading was placed under the decoding/encoding section. Math, writing and motor skills were included. Special physical education, home economics, music, art and SCIS science performance objectives were developed to supplement the general cognitive performance objectives.

Listening was considered to be an important curriculum area because the staff felt that hearing with purposeful attention must be taught in sequential steps as a part of the regular instructional program throughout the grades.

Naming or labelling was included in the performance objectives because disadvantaged children do not know the names of many things. Their information is limited and so their processes which are expressed in language are often immature. It was hoped that the successful combination of manipulation and labelling would help the children to develop knowledge.

Observing was also included in the curriculum because children need to become aware of things through the senses of sight, hearing, understanding and apprehending with the mind.

Speaking involving standard English was included in the curriculum. Dialect is fine for spontaneous speech and to compare or convey ideas, opinions and feelings. However, the staff felt that the children must function in situations where the standard that is spoken is not dialect. Reading and spelling require the knowledge of standard English sounds.

Math skills were learned by first hand experience with many manipulative materials. Reciting the names of the numbers in order has the same relationship to math that the alphabet has to reading. Children gain understanding not from the objects, nor from what we tell about the objects but from their own actions on the objects. They are capable of a high order of reasoning if given materials that they understand.

Writing and Motor Skills were developed sequentially. The eye-hand exercises reenforce visual comparison skills.

Classification is an intellectual skill that lies at the core of certain kinds of learning. It is essential for problem solving in the fields of math, science and social studies. It requires the ability to recognize likenessess and difference between objects and to group them accordingly. The child's first experiences in classification should be with physical objects. They need to learn to use logic and reasoning in handling material things before they can do so with verbal problems.

Reading - Encoding/Decoding were included in the curriculum. Encoding is the ability to express ideas in words or gestures. Decoding is the ability to recognize symbols and gain meaning from them.

Seriation - is stressed by Piaget as a most important part of learning. Because Piaget's experiences indicate that seriation is more fully understood at six years of age (developmentally) it is included in the First through Third Level Performance Objectives.

As part of the research for the project, various curriculum designs and performance objective formats were examined very closely. The Montclair, New Jersey and Paterson, New Jersey Course of Studies were also examined as were various reading and math programs. The Curriculum Guides from the Bucks County Public Schools and from Marysville, California were closely persued as were the Instructional Objectives in Los Angeles, California.

Appleton Century Crofts Math Modules and Bank Street Reading System were examined and much was derived from them and incorporated into the First through Third Performance Objectives.

None of the above sources included areas devoted to Speaking, Naming, Perceptual Motor Skills, Classification, Observing or Seriation so the Title III staff developed these using the varied backgrounds of the staff members in speech and language correction and learning disabilities. Suggestions from Dale Avenue teachers were very helpful as well as information gained from books by specialists in the field of learning disabilities, reading, math, perceptual motor activities, language and child development.

The Kindergarten through Third Grade Performance Objectives were given to the first through third grade teachers to pilot in January 1972. At the suggestion of the principal, Peter J. Wild, meetings were arranged with the teachers on a regular but voluntary basis. The Title III Project Director and Research Director met every other Monday with the first level teachers, every other Wednesday with the second and every other Thursday with the third. Since the first level teachers were working with children who had had Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Performance Objectives, they did not have to be sold on the idea. They were impressed with the skills of the children, their ability to work on their own, to listen carefully and to follow directions. The second and third level teachers, while for the most part willing, at first had difficulty accepting the idea that some of the children in their classes would be on the

kindergarten level while others might be on a second or third level. The idea of keeping children with their chronological peers and working on whatever level they were at developmentally, either individually or in small groups rather than teaching the same thing to the entire class, was not an easy concept for the first to third level teachers to accept.

In order to determine where each child was in each category, teachers were to test the children in the performance objectives. Whereas the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers had each tested and taught these objectives in whatever way they wished, the first through third level teachers decided that they wanted the tests to be standardized at least for each level. They divided the areas among themselves. Mr. John Tomasi, a third level teacher, made up the math test for all three levels and a member of the Title III staff made up the speaking test for all three levels. The first level teachers made their own first level tests except for speaking and math. The second and third level teachers also made tests for all areas but speaking and math. All of the testing for the Encoding/Decoding section could be found in the Bank Street workbooks.

The results of the testing and the questions and remarks from the staff prompted the first revision of the First through Third Objectives in April, 1972. In June of 1972 the teachers were given sheets to fill out indicating their suggestions for changing the order of items in the performance objectives, changing the wording or adding or deleting specific objectives. They also submitted a record on each child. The record indicated the highest numbered performance objective item achieved in each

category as well as lesser numbered items that were not learned. (A copy of this record will go along with each child to his new teacher so that the child will be helped to advance to the next objective he is ready to master). The information derived from this teacher feedback will be used to once again revise the First through Third Level Performance Objectives. These revised objectives will be piloted in September of 1972 along with the Pre Kindergarten - Kindergarten Objectives in the Dale Avenue School and all Paterson, New Jersey kindergartens, first, second and third grades.

It is hoped that ongoing training during the 1972-73 school year will help the Paterson teachers to successfully implement the Performance Objective Curriculum. Since these schools may have different populations from Dale Avenue and because they do not have pre-kindergartens, it is anticipated that changes in the program and revisions in various performance objectives or possibly whole areas may be necessary. At the orientation meetings held in June of this year the teachers and administrators from all of the Paterson schools were informed by members of the Title III staff that they were all members of a large Paterson research team. Their input, reactions and suggestions will be received and incorporated into the Title III research findings.

Results of Specialized Reading Program at Dale Avenue School

The Reading Program that was reported in Research Bulletin, Volume II No. 1 ungraded reading for all first through third level children, at Dale Avenue School. Regardless of chronological age, all children from first to third

level were grouped homogeneously in regard to reading ability for the first forty-five minutes of the school day every day of the school year. The first grade children were grouped according to results on Pre-Kindergarten - Kindergarten Performance Objectives. The second and third level children were grouped according to teacher evaluation. Because several members of Title III staff, aides and specialists as well as classroom teachers, worked with reading groups, it was possible to keep them fairly small.

A questionnaire was sent to all who were involved in these reading groups from which the following information was derived.

Forty-three percent thought the idea of the forty-five minute reading group was excellent.

Fifty-three percent thought it was very good.

Four percent thought it was good.

No one rated it fair or poor.

Fifty percent of those acting as reading teachers indicated that <u>all</u> the children in their group had progressed favorably.

Forty-six percent indicated that <u>most</u> of the children in their group had progressed favorably.

No one indicated that none of the children had progressed favorably.

One hundred percent indicated that they would like to see the same format continued in 1972-73.

Thirty-two percent of those who taught reading suggested that a similar program for math be tried in 1972-73.

The results of the Stanford Reading Test have indicated that the first level children at Dale Avenue, who have received Pre-kindergarten - Kindergarten and First Level Performance Objectives, scored at the national norm in both reading and math. Significantly, these children progressed at their own rate not only in math and reading, but in the other skill areas and will continue from they left off when they enter the second level.

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